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PRESENT SITUATION IN COMMUNES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

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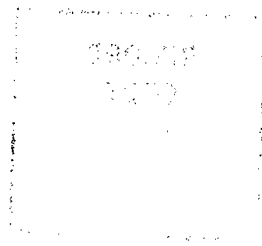
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## F O R E W A R D

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PRESENT SITUATION IN COMMUNES IN COMMUNIST CHINA

Following is a translation of an unsigned article in the Japanese-language periodical, Ajia Kenkyu (Data for Asia Research), No. 204, Tokyo, 9 February 1960, pages 2-8.

The State Statistical Bureau, in its preliminary statistical report, published on 22 January, states that last year's gross national industrial-agricultural output was 31 percent higher than that of the year before and that the goals for the final year of the Second Five-Year Plan (1962) was reached in only two years. According to an article in the 1 January Jen-min Jih-pao entitled "1960 Outlook", "this glorious achievements in the economic construction were attained through the implementation of the General Line and the Great Leap Forward Movement and through the creation of Communes."

Actually, however, the 1959 economic achievements were made through the reduction in the original goals of the economic plans, as was announced at the Eighth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party of last summer, and the relaxation of the Commune system to stimulate the progress of economic construction during the last half of the year.

A certain person who returned from a trip to China recently has reported his impressions of the Communes, the All-China Agricultural Exhibition, and the All-China Communications Exhibition as follows:

"The prime mover for the rapid development of China's agriculture and industry is the Communes. In order to develop agriculture, it is necessary to make land safe from drought and floods. The work of harnessing mountains and rivers is a struggle against nature, which needs to mobilize and control a huge mass of manpower. This manpower control is being carried out extremely forcefully through the Communes. The most noticeable difference between the conditions before and after the creation of Communes is that now the people feel what they are doing is to fulfill their future dreams. There is no evidence of cruelty or over-work, which was frequently the case in the past; the general impression of the people now is that they are working hard, hoping to make their dreams come true. Their hopes for the future are being raised through the showing of charts indicating the actual achievements in the Great Leap Forward Movement since 1958 as compared with the future plans at various exhibitions and at various buildings."

The 25 January Hong Kong Ching-chi Tao-pao carries an article entitled "The Communes I Saw", which gives an eye-witness account of the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune", located in the suburb of Peiping, and the "Tung-shan Commune", located in the suburb of Nanking. By combining the contents of this article with the report by the afore-mentioned person, let us scrutinize a little more in detail the actual conditions of the present-day Communes.

The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" (it means green throughout the four seasons) has hot houses which produce vegetables all year around, and has about 9,900 present households, with 39,900 members, and 55,000 mou of cultivated land.

The "Tung-shan Commune" has about 9,570 peasant households with 36,000 members, and controls an area of 30 li long and 28 li wide, which includes 67,000 mou of cultivated land.

The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" supplies vegetables to the people living around Peiping; its principal crops, therefore, are different from the other Communes. The "Tung-shan Commune" produces mostly rice. It has 60,580 mou of rice fields, equivalent to about 90 percent of the total cultivated land at the Commune. It also produces hemp, peanuts, oil vegetables, beans, and fruits, and raises hogs and poultry.

Factories Within a year after their establishment, both the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing" and the "Tung-shan" Communes began constructing their own industrial plants, simultaneously with the development of agriculture. The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" already has a repair shop (for automobiles and tractors), a rush-mat factory, a basket-weaving factory, and a tire repair shop. The "Tung-shan Commune", at one time, had 84 native blast furnaces producing 100 tons of iron in two months to solve its farm implement problems. Its farm implement plant last year produced about 65,000 pieces of farm tools, while the agricultural chemical plant played an important role in the extermination of insects (mostly mei bugs). Its brick factory is producing bricks to build living quarters and other buildings at the Commune, and the paper factory is producing wrapping paper, writing paper, and colored paper through reprocessing waste paper or by using native paper-making method.

Living Condition in Communes The living condition in the communes is gradually being improved. At the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune", the per-household annual income rose to 479 yuan Jen-min-piao in 1958 and 520 yuan in 1959. The purchasing power of the members of the "Tung-shan Commune" in 1959 rose 42 percent over that in 1958. The Direct Selling Department of the Supply and Marketing Cooperative at the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune", similar to a department store in Hong Kong, is stocked with such items as hot water bottles, tea pots and cups, fabrics, damask, and radios, and such foodstuffs as fruits, liquors, meat

products, and canned goods. Such merchandise somewhat indicates that the purchasing power of the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" is high. (The purchasing power of the other communes can be estimated from these data).

Distribution System The distribution system at the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" combines supply and wages. The rate for the distribution of supply is 30 percent of the total income and the rate for wages "paid according to work" is 70 percent. The grain being supplied at present is allowed to be taken home even though the members eat at the mess halls. The members consider the grain they receive their greatest security.

According to the report on the "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune", prepared by the afore-mentioned person, the annual income of the commune is 12,100,000 yuan and the expenditure consists of 37 percent for production expenses, 3.5 percent for taxes, 12 percent for savings (to be used to expand the re-production systems), and 1.5 percent for welfare fund reserve. The commune has 136 mess halls, serving a total of 21,000 persons. The other distribution system which was not mentioned in the Ching-chi Tao pao is that, in the distribution of grain, children under 7 get 25 chin of grain (equivalent to two yuan cash) per month; children over 7, older people, and sick people get 37-38 chin (3 yuan), and workers get 60 chin (5 yuan). The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" pays cash to its people, calculated according to the amount of grain each household is supposed to get. The peasants call this system the "t'ieh-fan-wan" [metal rice bowl], which means the bowl is unbreakable even if it is dropped and that they can always eat. Besides the distribution of supply (goods), the peasants are paid on credit each month according to the "fixed piece work system" (for example, the weeding of a mou of land is counted as 8 points and all other work has fixed points) and the credit is balanced at the end of the year. Together with the payments in kind, the monthly income of a peasant comes to about 27-28 yuan. The factory workers are paid according to the monthly wage scale based on work grades and do not get goods in payment. The average monthly wage is 30 yuan and, including the incentive payments, it amounts to 32-33 yuan per month, slightly higher than the peasants' wages. Each mess hall can accommodate only about 20 persons, and it is more like a common kitchen than a mess hall. Mess halls are used almost entirely by unmarried persons, while people with families usually have old folks do the cooking for them, so they take the food home to eat. In that way, they do not break up the family life.

The Tung-wei mess hall at Shih-ching-shan feeds rice, "man-t'ou" made of corn, and a large amount of "chiao-tzu." One "chiao-tzu" costs 6 lin (equivalent to 90 Japanese sen).

Rice costs 3 chien a bowl (about 4.5 Japanese yen). Usually, two bowls of rice are enough for a meal. The side dishes cost 2 chien per dish.

The annual income per peasant household is 500 yuan, or little more than 40 yuan per month. If a household has 4 persons, per-capita income is about 10 yuan per month and this amount is not enough to buy and eat rice costing 3 chien per bowl all the time.

Welfare Facilities The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" has a hospital and a clinic complete with doctors, nurses, and medicines. The cost of medical care for patient, including the cost of medicine, is about 80 chien per visit. The "Tung-shan Commune" has a hospital consists of three clinics and 10 maternity sections. The clinics are divided into Chinese medicine section and Western medicine section, both of which are equally popular among the members of the commune.

The "Ssu-chi-ch'ing Commune" has 30 primary schools and 3 secondary schools. Children enroll in primary schools when they are seven. Each child pays a little over one yuan when enrolling in a primary school. The "Tung-shan Commune" has 3 secondary agricultural schools with a total of 6,700 student students.

Superior Points in Communes The gist of the article regarding the superior points of communes, written by Hu Hsi-kuei, Deputy Director and Party Secretary of the People's University and published in the 17 January Jen-min Jih-pao, is as follows:

1. The establishment of communes has facilitated the development of socialist reform in the farm villages and also has completely eliminated the possibility of revival of capitalism. The establishment of communes has also raised the level of collective ownership system under Socialism and has shown the advantages of the communal ownership system. It clearly indicates that, in the course of socialist reform to solve the problems of ownership of production materials, the communes are better than the highest form of agricultural producers cooperatives. The key point in the agricultural cooperatives is the transformation from private ownership by the peasants to collective ownership under Socialism, but the key point in the communes is the improvement of collective ownership under Socialism and, at the same time, the gradual transformation into mass ownership under Socialism.

2. The establishment of communes has increased the socialist productive capacity and the speed of socialist construction. It has also helped to expand the scope of collective

ownership and to transform part of it into mass ownership. The changes in the ownership of production system naturally helped to expand the productive capacity. The communes also helped the establishment of an organized society consisting of industry, agriculture, commerce, and military, which in turn helped the party to complete its policy of "walking on two feet." The increased iron and steel production and the great leap forward in the 1959 agricultural production, despite the serious effect of natural calamities, were made possible only through the establishment of communes.

3. The establishment of communes has facilitated the expansion of production and, at the same time, up-lifted material and cultural levels of the masses. The communes use a distribution method which combines the wage system and the supply (goods) system. The wage system guarantees the principles of "pay according to work" and gives the members a regular income which they can spend as they wish. The wage system also helps to improve production and living standard. The supply (goods) system (generally 20-30 percent) is extremely useful for people who are temporarily out of work due to sickness and for those members with a large number of dependents to solve the problems of livelihood. Actually, it is like a type of social insurance for the farmers.

The grain supply system being practiced in the farm villages is determined according to the amount of agricultural production. The distribution system practiced by the communes, which combines the wage system and the supply system, is a great undertaking of Socialism and is the beginning of Communism.

4. Communes are the best form of organized society to carry out the transformation from collective ownership to mass ownership and from Socialism to Communism. Socialism, while in the process of gradual transition into Communism, has an important decision to make regarding which one of the two types of organized society to establish during the transitional period.

The foregoing is the outline of the article written by Hu Hsi-kuei. Judging from this article, it is incorrect to say that the communes are actually a retrogressed form of the highest form of agricultural cooperatives. There is no evidence indicating that the decision on communes so willingly made at the Enlarged Meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, held during the summer of the year before at Pei-tai-ho, has been reversed even one step.